REMARKS

Claims 1-46, 152, 155, and 156 were presented for examination. All of the claims have been rejected in four separate rejections with the primary reference being Marinangeli et al. (US 6,187,981). The title has been objected to because it is not descriptive. Claims 11-14 were rejected to because the branches were not identified properly. Claim 18 was objected to as being a duplicate of clam 2.

A new title has been submitted. Claims 11-14 have been amended to insert the language "per paraffin molecule" from claim 1. Claim 18 has been canceled.

The rejections based on Marinangeli et al. are respectfully traversed.

The Applicants assert that they made the invention claimed in the present application prior to the filing date of the application that resulted in the Marinangeli et al. patent, July 19, 1999. The Applicants submit the enclosed Declaration Under Rule 131 of Brendan D. Murray in support of that assertion.

Brendan Murray declares that the invention claimed in the application was made in the United States prior to July 19, 1999, and that he is the author of the memorandum attached to the Declaration to H. L. Fong and T. B. Thomason which describes a proposal to make branched alkyl benzenes and their sulfonates by taking a linear paraffin mix produced by a Fischer-Tropsch process and hydrocracking and hydroisomerizing the linear paraffins to produce branched paraffins which would then be dehydrogenated to produce branched olefins which would then be used to make biodegradable branched alkyl benzenes, branched alkyl benzene sulfonates and derivatives thereof.

Brendan Murray declares that the third page of the memorandum describes an experiment that was performed prior to July 19, 1999, at Westhollow Technology Center in Houston, Texas. Brendan Murray also declares that the experiment involved taking a paraffin wax which had been hydrocracked and hydroisomerized and fractionating it to prepare a branched C_{10-14} paraffinic mixture which was then dehydrogenated using a platinum on alumina catalyst at a reaction temperature of 495°C, an operating pressure of 20 psig, and a molar hydrogen to hydrocarbon ratio of 4:1. Brendan Murray also declares that a conversion of branched paraffins into branched C_{10-14} olefins of 15 percent as measured by gas chromatography was achieved and that the branched olefins were separated from the paraffins by treatment with a 5A molecular

sieve and that this experiment shows that the invention claimed in the present application was reduced to practice prior to July 19, 1999.

The Applicants assert that the enclosed Declaration is a complete response to the four Section 103 rejections. An early notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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